

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is an LOA?

A: The Letter of Agreement is a document stating the terms of service, qualifications of vendors, reimbursement rates, etc. for various services procured by vocational rehabilitation.

Q: Where can I find the LOAs and other documents?

A: LOA documents are available on the DHS website link: www.tn.gov/humanserv. Click on 2015 Vocational Rehabilitation Letter of Agreement.

Q: How do I apply for a Letter of Agreement (LOA)?

A: Complete the Community Rehabilitation Provider Vendor Application along with the Letter of Agreement, attachments and required documents as noted in the application package. These documents should all be submitted by email in a PDF format to Valerie Caldwell-Buford by October 17, 2014 (renewing vendors) / October 24, 2014 (new vendors).

Q: Why is there not a signature line on the LOA attachments?

A: The LOA document is where vendors will sign the agreement. The services the vendor intends to provide will be indicated on the LOA document. Vendors do not need to sign the attachments. Vendors do need to sign the Acknowledgement Sheet for each attachment they are applying for to document their knowledge of the attachments.

Q: Do I need to have three staff members to get an LOA?

A: Only if you are providing services under the SE attachment. Every agency should have adequate staff to provide the services that they have agreed to provide, but SE is the only attachment with a required minimum number.

Q: Do the letters of reference required to be submitted with the LOA application apply to the individual staff members or the agency?

A: The letters of reference should cover the agency itself, not the individual staff members and should attest to your ability to provide a quality service.

Q: Does an agency have to be CARF accredited?

A: No, agencies are not required to be accredited by CARF. But any accreditation an agency has should be included in their application.

Q: How recent should the background checks for staff members be?

A: Background checks should be national (not local or statewide) and cannot be older than 12 months from the date of your LOA application.

Q: If I have an LOA for a service, can I add another service later in the year?

A: All services the vendor intends to provide should be included in the initial application. Vendors cannot add services during the year, unless the Division identifies at some other point a need for additional services and accepts applications.

- Q: Can I still apply if I have staff members that have not completed the required 12 hours of training?
- A: Yes, when you complete the application indicate with an asterisk the staff member's name, date of training and location that they will attend. You will also need to send Valerie Caldwell-Buford an email with documentation after the staff has completed the training, so your application can be updated. Staff members will not be able to provide service until the training is complete and an Acknowledgement Sheet has been sent to Valerie Caldwell-Buford.

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT SERVICES

- Q: What educational level is required for someone to conduct vocational assessment?
- A: The educational level for vocational assessments is indicated on the attachment. A Bachelor's Degree and training or related experience is required. Please see the attachment.
- Q: If the CRP wanted to continue doing "Integrated Work Assessments" when indicated, that used to be under Supported Employment, would an LOA under Vocational Assessments be needed? If so would the Agency need to be able to perform all of the assessments listed in the 2015 Vocational Assessment Attachment?
- A: Yes, You will need to indicate the vocational assessments that you are qualified to offer.

TRIAL WORK

- Q: Do you have to be a Supported Employment provider in order to provide Trial Work Experience services?
- A: No. Trial Work Experiences is a separate service and you do not have to have been an SE provider in order to provide Trial Work Experiences.
- Q: Do you need to have an IPE before Trial Work Experience (TWE) services are provided?
- A: The VR counselor must complete a Trial Work IPE before TWE is conducted. In most cases the eligibility and regular IPE will be developed after the TWE.
- Q: What if the client cannot complete a second TWE, but there is some information to report, how is that handled?
- A: DRS cannot pay for a partial (incomplete) TWE, however the information developed during the incomplete assessment should be included in the report to the counselor.
- Q: What training is required for employees providing TWE services?
- A: They must attend two provider trainings per year.

JOB READINESS/JOB PLACEMENT

- Q: If a client agrees to take a job for less than minimum wage will that count as a successful placement?
- A: In order to count as a successful placement, the client must earn at least minimum wage.
- Q: Will there be special pay for placing individuals who have felony convictions?
- A: In our current LOA, services and fees are related to the clients' disability. Their criminal

background is not a factor in placement fees.

Q: Clarify the JP requirement to have a staffing if a placement is less than 30 hours. Who is involved in that staffing?

A: VR counselors are responsible for staffing the case with their supervisor.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Q: What is the process for requesting a Special Services attachment?

A: Services not covered under other LOA attachments will be covered by the Special Services attachment. The vendor should use the Special Services template (available at www.tn.gov/humanserv) to provide a description of their proposed services. Services should be in keeping with the needs in the regions. The information should be discussed with Regional Supervisors and the Program Support Specialist in your area prior to applying for the attachment.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Q: I am being told our SE Employment Specialist must have BA degree, is that the case? If that is the case can a supervisor sign off on the forms needing that type of oversight? If so would that supervisor be required to have all the VR training and the 12 hrs. per year as well?

A: Yes, a degree is needed for an Employment Specialist to work on the SE LOAs. A supervisor cannot simply "sign off" on the forms, they must be actively participating in the placement process also. Every staff member who is providing services under the LOA must meet the qualifications and ongoing training requirements for the specific service(s) they provide.

Q: Do all 3 staff on the SE letter have to meet the employment specialist requirements?

A: No, but one staff member on the SE letter must meet the requirements.

Q: If we have a pilot program attachment will they be changing?

A: Not until there is revision on the pilot project. You do need to reapply for a 2015 LOA and send your current Special Services attachment with your LOA application packet, but there are no changes to the attachments.

Q: Do vendors who only provided SE in the past need to add the assessment attachment so they can continue to do SE?

A: Yes, if they will be doing Integrated Work Site Assessments.

Q: Are SE vendors involved in determining whether a client should receive SE services?

A: Yes, SE services will now begin with a consultation meeting between the client, vendor and counselor. This meeting will be held to plan SE services. This is part of the SE process for which a vendor will be paid.

Q: Please clarify an item on Staff Qualifications for SE. On Education does it mean that if you have a Masters or Bachelor's degree you don't need to have a Training Certificate?

A: You will need both a degree and a training certificate.

Q: Does a VR case still remain in status 18 for 30 days following placement, prior to being placed into status 22?

A: Please see the SE User Guide for more information on Stabilization.

Q: With the stabilization rate being separated into 3 steps, at what point is it determined that stabilization is complete and the stabilization letter is given to the CRP to move to Medicaid Waiver Follow Along?

A: Stabilization will occur differently in each individual depending on their employment needs, limitations, support, and vocational goal. While there is no timeline as to how many days of employment before the job can be considered stabilized, the VR Counselor must use his or her professional judgment in making the decision based on documented information. The VR Counselor will prepare a letter to the DIDD Independent Support Coordinator (ISC) requesting possible funding of on-going support services for the DIDD Medicaid Waiver recipient.

Q: Are the reporting forms for the 2015 LOA different from our previous forms? When will the forms be available?

A: No substantial changes were made. We are putting the forms into an Excel format that will be posted prior to the Letter of Agreement going into effect January 1, 2015.

Q: What training is required for Job Coaches?

A: Each CRP Employee who is providing supported employment services under this Attachment must receive a minimum of twelve (12) additional hours of VR approved continuing education training per year, which include all mandatory training for Supported Employment services. All training must have a direct relationship to the provision of Supported Employment services. Documentation to support that training has occurred must be submitted to VR each renewal year and upon request by reviewers. All CRP staff, regardless of their job title/function, who are going to provide supported employment services are required to show proof that they maintain the minimum 12 training hours for continuing education.

Q: We understand that the pay stub is to be turned in with the Career Development and Placement Report?

A: The CRP will complete the SE: Hire Report and submit it to the VR Counselor along with a properly signed and dated A&I, wage verification documentation (copy of pay stub) for payment of the Career Development and Placement outcome. (See SE User Guide page 12). If there are extenuating circumstances, please consult with the VR counselor.

Q: If I have further questions or need further information, who do I contact?

A: Valerie Caldwell-Buford at 615-253-3968 or email her at valerie.caldwell-buford@tn.gov.